

Annual Report of the Executive Secretary of A.C.R.L., 1947-48¹

IT is difficult to know just what to include in this report—since at various times during the year different groups have heard me give the current activities of the office, and also the year's program is one with which you are familiar as you have contributed so much to its fulfillment. I trust there will not be too much repetition for some of you—but perhaps the very nature of an annual report makes some reiteration inevitable.

As you all know, with the creation of the office of Executive Secretary there have been many opinions as to its function. It was my aim, first, to try to discover the desires of the membership for the activities of the new office. The Brown report and the statements of the Committee on Policy offered direction. The board of directors have given guidance, some groups have met with the executive secretary for the specific purpose of discussing the path to take this first year, and I have made it a point to talk with as many A.C.R.L. members as possible. (Conferences and speaking engagements have given me the opportunity to talk with many librarians across the country.)

With this effort at clarification of the task set before me I have proceeded. And now I shall try to report to you what has transpired since April 1947.

Perhaps I might start with "field work"—so called. Hoping to strengthen our organization I have participated in the following library conferences: New England Regional Library Association, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Texas, and Louisiana State Associations. In all cases I spoke to and entered into a discussion period with the college, university, and reference section, and in two instances spoke before the general session as well. I made it a point to visit as many libraries to and

from the meetings as possible, and in addition have made some trips with the express purpose of visiting libraries to acquaint myself better with their activities, problems, and needs. All in all I visited 54 libraries in 15 different states.

I also attended such library meetings as the Conference of Eastern College Librarians, the Special Libraries Association meeting, the Conference on Educational Training of Librarians held at Atlanta, the meeting on Cooperation of Southern Libraries held at the University of Florida, the building meeting held at the University of Nebraska, and the dedication of the University of Nebraska building.

At the Southeastern Conference on Library Training in Atlanta I acted somewhat as a consultant. It was a unique and highly successful conference with public, school, and college librarians meeting around the conference table, and in the end pretty much agreeing as to what constituted a core curriculum for librarianship.

The Florida conference on regional library planning was a stimulating one. It was encouraging to see the librarians of that section playing an important part in the regional planning in higher education in the South—and it was most beneficial to me to get better acquainted with some of their problems.

As you know, more and more libraries are adopting the divisional plan of organization, so it was particularly helpful to attend the meeting at the University of Nebraska, to see their library in full-scale operation, and to discuss informally with those present.

Contacts with Educators and Educational Associations

Believing that a great deal is to be gained by establishing and maintaining cordial relations with, and presenting the library point of

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view to educators and educational associations in the field of higher education, I have carried on the following activities. Soon after my arrival in Chicago, letters were written to the presidents or secretaries of six leading national educational associations expressing A.C.R.L.'s desire to associate more closely with them on problems of mutual interest. They all expressed interest in working and cooperating with us, and the American Association of Junior Colleges made an immediate request that the executive office work with their special library committee in preparing a junior college list of instructional materials. I have met with members of the committee on two special occasions.

I attended the Conference on Foreign Student Advisers sponsored by the Institute of International Education, the N.E.A.'s conference on higher education, the UNESCO conference held in Philadelphia last spring, and was one of A.C.R.L.'s delegates to the Chicago meeting of the American Council on Education. I acted as representative of the association at the inaugurations of President Stoddard of the University of Illinois, of President Johnson of Fisk, and of President Miller of the University of Florida. These meetings provided an opportunity to talk with a number of leading educators and to take part in a number of discussions presenting the library's point of view. I was particularly pleased with the contacts made at the meetings of the N.E.A. and the American Council on Education.

There have been a few direct contacts with certain faculty groups. I spoke before the Kent State faculty and library staff on "What the Faculty May Expect of the Library and What the Library May Expect of the Faculty," before the faculty and student body at Friends University and at Bethel College, and before the library club of Northwestern State College, Natchitoches, La., consisting of library staff, library science students, and a few faculty. At the invitation of Wheaton College in Illinois an afternoon was spent on their campus discussing their particular library problems with the president, faculty library committee, and the library staff.

Focal Point for Information

Special attention has been given to making

the office a focal point for information.

We have attempted to assemble various documents concerning the administration of college, university, and reference libraries and make them available for consultation. Requests have gone out to librarians for annual reports, statistics, information on special collections, special studies in progress, copies of bibliographies, rules and rates of microfilm and photostat services, plans of buildings, etc. Each member of the A.C.R.L. received our specific request for such material through the "Newsletter"—then a general request was made in one issue of *College and Research Libraries*. Much material is coming in.

A letter was sent out to 100 of the larger libraries asking if they would submit copies of any studies they may have made on phases of their work. Several reports have come in, some of which existed only in typewritten form. Some of these were listed in the "Newsletter," and we have received a number of loan requests.

We trust that we have given practical assistance to those writing to this office for information. We have had many requests for information on many subjects—from where can one buy a Cutter table, to how one may go about obtaining money from one of the foundations. In some instances we were able to supply the information needed, and in other cases we referred the question to experts in the field. The latter was usually done when information was wanted on a subject for which we have a special committee. It might be of interest to note that building information and standards received more requests than any other subjects.

Office Visitors

In addition to the number of requests by mail a good many people have visited the office in person. The range has been wide: a congressman and the Librarian of Congress from Argentina; the librarian from the University of the Philippines; a librarian soon to go to Cuba to become librarian of a college there; an architect commissioned to build a library; representatives of a university press interested in publishing certain bibliographies; a dean of a university looking for a librarian; just to mention a few—and, of course, all the usual number of librarians who come in to a

central office for the general and varied reasons which you can imagine.

Work with Committees and Sections

The general desire of the membership seemed to be for the association to work chiefly through committees with an executive office to stimulate and coordinate the work of the committees. In an effort to carry out this idea, I have written many letters as well as made personal contacts to keep in touch with the committees and with the various sections. The office has offered to serve as a depository for the correspondence files of the committees. A number of suggestions coming in from the membership and some that I picked up have been passed on to some of the committees. This office has assisted in getting information regarding some of the committees' activities printed in the professional journals—such as the Membership Committee's page in the *A.L.A. Bulletin* and notices of the Building Committee's clinic.

Some clerical work for the committees has had its source in our office. Mrs. Lillian Shepherd, my secretary, has had charge of a number of mailings. A letter was sent out to the college, university, and research libraries in the United States and Canada for the Publications Committee. Two mailings have gone out to the institutional members for the Recruiting Committee. A letter was sent to all members of the College Libraries Section and to institutions building or planning new buildings for the Building Committee. Also we prepared for this committee a list of institutions which are building or planning new buildings. A mailing went to 900 public libraries for the committee on increasing the subscriptions to *College and Research Libraries*. A mailing for the Membership Committee went to some 2200 college, university, and reference librarians who were members of A.L.A. but had not designated A.C.R.L. as their choice of division. A geographical list of the membership was prepared for this committee. A list of some 700 new members was made for the editor of *College and Research Libraries*. Typed lists have been made of the section members for all sections—with two supplementary lists as new members joined.

We would have liked to make all the lists

and do all the addressing that has been requested by the various sections and committees, but have been unable to do so because of the cumbersome record-keeping system at Headquarters which provides for reproduction of our lists only by typing. We believe that we will be able to fulfill nearly all such requests for lists, etc., if the proposed plan of mechanizing A.L.A. clerical-record-keeping routines is adopted, or if we have addressograph plates prepared. We look hopefully to a future in which we will be able to do considerably more of this clerical work for our sections and committees and will devote less time to it. In the work this year in two instances we were able to take advantage of the A.L.A. Publishing Department addressograph plates, and on three occasions we were able to bring in outside help paid for by the committees.

Personnel

In line with emphasis on personnel in President Carlson's plan for the year, I have attempted to make as many individual contacts as possible. There have been many requests for aid in helping fill various positions. Although the office is not attempting to run a placement bureau, it may be possible to use my knowledge of people and their abilities as I get acquainted with them to help place the right person in the right job when there are requests. I worked very closely with the A.L.A. Placement Office. In one instance, I had the opportunity to assist in the solution of a specific problem regarding professional training for librarianship. We received a letter from a college administrator saying that his institution was looking for a librarian, and his faculty library committee were pretty well divided on the question of a professionally trained person *versus* a teacher. I was able to talk with the members of the committee and at their request also recommended some professional reading on the subject.

One thing I have attempted to build up which is paying off is a record of leaders and potential leaders in the college, university, and reference library field. This record has been used in filling many requests for competent persons to make library surveys, librarians to advise on recataloging and other aspects of technical and readers' services, committee work, etc.

Research and Publications

It has been indicated that in the field of research and publications the task of the executive secretary should be to encourage, suggest, and stimulate. I have endeavored to become better acquainted with the problems and needs in general, and at the suggestion of the board of directors am compiling a list of research studies now under way at the various library schools. Throughout the year I have made an effort to discover individuals with particular fields of interest and encourage their continued activity with a view to publication. It has been possible to talk with several persons on different subjects, and I know that in at least a few cases some specific results have been achieved. I am in a position to learn about a good many news items which I

pass on to *College and Research Libraries* as well as other professional journals, and I have assisted A. L. Remley in securing advertising. A "Newsletter" to all the members went out in December.

A.L.A. Relationships

Perhaps before closing I should say a word or two about relationships with A.L.A. I have found everyone at Headquarters most cordial and cooperative. It is understood that I am responsible directly to my board of directors. I meet with the heads of the departments at their weekly meetings, at which times there is the specific opportunity to present the needs and interests of A.C.R.L., and at all times there is a free exchange of ideas, advice, and counsel.

Digest of Minutes

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at the American Embassy in Moscow, which indicated that endeavors by the embassy to facilitate exchanges between American and Russian institutions by acting as intermediary had been terminated by the Soviet decree prohibiting direct communication between officials of Soviet institutions and representatives of foreign governments in the Soviet Union and specifying that such communications must be channeled through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Ruggles expressed the view that it would be unwise for American institutions to continue sending publications on exchange or to enter upon a barter arrangement without concrete evidence of reciprocity.

Cumulative Book Index

Lawrence Heyl of the Princeton Library reported that the H. W. Wilson Company proposed to discontinue the present full coverage of books in English in the *Cumulative Book Index* and that it was to become a cata-

log of books printed in this country only. This change was being made, following one of the Wilson questionnaires, in the interest of keeping the *Index* at its present price instead of keeping the present coverage and raising the price 25 to 30 per cent. Mr. Heyl felt that this was a great mistake—that the *Index* in its present form would save libraries in labor far more than they would suffer through the increased cost—and he therefore urged the association to take a stand against the proposed reduced coverage. After a brief discussion it was voted unanimously that the association urge the Wilson Company to continue the *C.B.I.* in its present form.

Date of the Next Meeting

After a brief discussion it was voted to hold the next meeting in Chicago at the time of the A.L.A. Midwinter Conference.

CHARLES W. DAVID
Executive Secretary